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Applicability: Regional Centers

PURPOSE:

Aquatic activities are an integral part of programming in the continuum of services offered by the Department. Such activities afford therapeutic and developmental opportunities but require surveillance of an extraordinary nature. A safe, hazard-free and sanitary environment is essential to insure the welfare of the individuals served. Facilities/programs which offer aquatic activities shall comply to a minimum with the following regulations:

I. POOL RESTRICTIONS

Where the maximum pool depth exceeds five (5) feet, six (6) inches, there must be a safety rope between the shallow and the deep end which must be located at a depth of four (4) feet six (6) inches as per Department of Health and Environmental Control Regulation 61-51, Public Swimming Pools (Attachment I). A therapeutic pool (less than five (5) feet deep) need not be restricted by a safety rope.

II. RATIOS FOR LIFEGUARD, IN-WATER STAFF AND DECK SPOTTERS

A. PUBLIC SWIMMING POOLS

# Swimmers	# On Deck Lifeguards	# In-Water Staff	# Spotters	Minimum Total
1-5	1	1	0	2
6-10	1	1	1	3
11-20	2	2	2	6
21-30	3	3	3	9
31-40	4	4	4	12

Groups exceeding forty will require at a minimum a 1:10 ratio for on deck lifeguards, in-water staff and spotters.

Staff ratios for supervision of individuals using a therapeutic pool (Class D) are as follows:

# Swimmers	# In-Water Staff	# Spotters	Minimum Total
1-5	1	1	2
6-10	1	2	3
11-20	2	2	4

B. LAKE, OCEAN AND POND SWIMMING

1. There will be a 1:1 in-water staff to swimmer ratio. This includes, but is not limited to, boating and other aquatic activities. When boating 1:1 ratio excludes the operator of a motorized boat.
2. There will be a 1:10 lifeguard to swimmer ratio for all outings which involve activities such as swimming, boating, fishing, etc.

C. SPECIAL RATIOS

There will be one to one (1:1) in-water staff to swimmer ratio for the following activities:

1. Non-ambulatory individuals (also required to wear a personal flotation device, (PFD).
2. Individuals who take medications to control seizures who are exempt (see special precautions) from wearing a PFD.
3. Individuals who are placed on Level I accountability.

III. SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS/CONSIDERATIONS

- A. All individuals who are currently taking medications to control seizures will be required to wear special identification either a RED NYLON SHIRT OR RED VEST.
- B. Individuals who are classified as non-swimmers and currently taking medication to control seizure activity will be required to wear a PFD in addition to the special identification.
- C. SPECIAL OLYMPIC AQUATICS TEAM members, who are seizure prone, will not be required to wear PFD or have 1:1 supervision during practice or competition.

IV. LIFEGUARD DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

- A. Supervise spotters.
- B. Persevere the safety of all people in the pool by enforcing pool rules, regulations and policies and by prohibiting unsafe activities.
- C. Rescue and provide emergency care and treatment to accident victims.
- D. Maintain as a minimum a current lifeguard certificate.
- E. Maintain current cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid certification

V. DECK OBSERVATIONS (Spotters)

Spotters are defined as staff who, under the direct supervision of the lifeguard (or in-water staff in the case of therapeutic pools), are strategically positioned/stationed around the pool deck to observe individuals in the water. Spotters also assist individuals getting in and out of the pool and out towels, and assist with showering prior to pool entry. Their duties shall also include the following:

- A. Sit or stand at designated stations.
- B. Will not leave station without authorization from life Guard (in-water staff).
- C. Observation of assigned pool area(s), zones(s) and/or individuals.
- D. Notification to lifeguard of any unusual water activities (horseplay, seizure activities, individual underwater longer than usual, individuals contaminating water, etc.)
- E. Verbal interaction with individuals by prompting, encouraging, praising, etc.
- F. Follow designated emergency procedures and duties per assigned station.
- G. Assist lifeguard (in-water staff) upon request.

VI. SPECIAL INDIVIDUAL IDENTIFICATION

A special file on each individual who participates in the swimming program will be kept at the pool area. This file will contain the following information:

- A. Level of supervision.
- B. Brief behavioral description (ability to follow simple or complex directions, mal-adaptive behavior, etc.)
- C. Seizures (frequency, times seizures typically occur, etc.)
- D. Hepatitis B status
- E. Physical limitations (range of motion, ambulation, visual or hearing handicaps, etc.)
- F. Swimming skills (swimmer/non-swimmer, water safety skills)
- G. Aquatic needs (PFD, 1:1 supervision, etc.)
- H. General comments

VII. EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

DHEC Regulation 61-51- Public Swimming Pools shall be followed with regard to all necessary emergency equipment and safety/sanitation aspects. Each region will develop a written policy pertaining to pool security.

VIII. EMERGENCY DRILLS

All aquatic personnel will be trained on basic reach and rescue techniques, with drills conducted quarterly and documented.

Quarterly Emergency Lifeguard Procedures Drills will include: when and how to remove victim from water; CPR; removing other individuals from pool; who to call; when to call; specific duties of spotters.

IX. PUBLIC SWIMMING

All regional center outings involving in-water activities are to be approved by the respective Facility Administrator or his designee.

Emergency procedures will be developed for outings involving water activities to include knowledge and location of emergency facilities as well as emergency telephone numbers and. A cell telephone should accompany the group to be used for emergency communication.

A first aid kit, resuscitation bag, and ring buoy with throw line will be required on all outings involving in-water activities (swimming, boating, etc.)

The lifeguard will have final authority over all water safety aspects of the outing.

X. OUTSIDE GROUPS USING POOL FACILITIES:

Outside groups, involving individuals with handicaps requesting use of the pool will be required to follow this policy.

Non-handicapped groups will be responsible for safety procedures and provide a certified lifeguard. A "Hold-Harmless" agreement shall be signed at each use by responsible parties. (Attachment II).

XI. SPECIAL OLYMPIC SWIM TEAM

Special Olympic Swim meets will be exempt from this directive and will be governed by Special Olympic Rules and Regulations.

XII. POLICY AUDITS

Staff designated by the respective Facility Administrator will conduct and document monthly an audit of pool procedures and policies.

David A. Goodell
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